

Webinar 5 Handout:
THE THINGS THAT MAKE US FAT

We all know that eating too much food can make us gain weight, but it is certainly not too much kale that is making us pack on the pounds! When a client tells me that they don't eat bananas because they have too much sugar I say, "I can promise you it's not bananas and carrots that have made our country obese!" As much as I like to spend the majority of my time helping people determine what they *should* be eating, I have to address what they should be *avoiding* as well. What you don't eat is just as important as what you do eat. While it can be hard to keep up with the latest research on do's and don'ts - you know, one week red wine is good and the next it's bad - there are a few definite red flags that I always tell my clients to steer clear of. These are the "things" (foods and additives) that make up products filled with sugar, unhealthy fats, sodium, and artificial ingredients. They have all the bad without any of the good! Keep this list on hand as a friendly reminder for you and your clients.

Foods to Avoid

Artificial Sweeteners: How many times can I say NO to artificial sweeteners? In liquid or food form, they distort natural sense of taste, cause cravings for sweet foods, increase appetite, and leave you unsatisfied and hungry for more. You may think you're doing your body a service by drinking zero-calorie sodas and eating sugar-free snacks, but what you're really doing is filling up on dangerous chemicals and artificial ingredients that will just cause you to eat more and ultimately gain weight. One study found that with each can of diet soda consumed per day, a person's risk for being overweight increased by 41%. Help your clients learn to appreciate the real taste of food.

Baked Goods: They may look and smell delicious, but baked goods can be bad news. While there are certainly better-for-you baked good options out there made with healthy ingredients like whole grains and pureed vegetables, the majority of commercial baked goods are full of unhealthy fats, too many calories and tons of added sugar. Even harmless sounding foods like a bran muffin can pack more fat and calories than a cupcake with frosting! Does that sound like a healthy breakfast to you? In most situations baked goods don't fit into the everyday diet and even the most wholesome options should be saved for a conscious indulgence.

Coffee Drinks: Believe me when I say that I love a good cup of coffee, but specialty coffee drinks aren't the way to get your morning jolt. Coffee is a great source of antioxidants and can be extremely healthful - research indicates that people who regularly drink coffee are less likely to develop Parkinson's disease, colon cancer, cirrhosis, and gallstones - but specialty drinks are typically loaded with added sugar or artificial sweeteners, saturated fats, and tons of calories. Stick with coffee with milk to avoid unnecessary weight gain from your morning joe.

Fat-Free Foods: ? We now know how good certain fats can be and that our bodies need the good fats for energy, hormone function, vitamin absorption, heart health and so much more, but fat-free foods are still on the market. Fat-free foods offer none of this nutrition, are rarely satisfying and are usually loaded with sugar and other junk to make up for what's lost from fat. Toss the fat-free foods and opt for smaller portions of whole, full fat foods. Eating a little good fat will help you stay satisfied and prevent you from overeating and gaining weight.

Fatty Meats: I'm definitely not anti-meat, but not all meat is created equally. Fatty meats like sausage, marbled beef and lamb, bacon, ribs, and skin-on poultry pack more calories and unhealthy fats per ounce than their leaner counterparts and cannot only lead to weight gain but harm your heart as well. Opt for small portions of lean cuts of beef without marbling (or better yet, go for grass-fed beef), skinless poultry, and wild fish to get your animal protein in.

Fried foods: I don't care if it's deep fried kale - deep frying is never healthy! Foods that have been breaded and deep fried in oil have too much fat, sodium and empty calories. This is basically the trifecta for weight gain and bloating - always say no to the deep fryer!

Nitrates: Found in processed meats like hot dogs, salami, and bologna, nitrates are not only linked to increased risks of colorectal cancer, but you'll notice they're typically found in high fat packaged and processed foods. Nitrates and nitrites are added as preservatives to help develop flavor, maintain color and prevent bacterial growth in processed meats. Most companies use synthetic sodium nitrite, which reacts with other compounds in the meat during cooking and generates carcinogenic compounds called nitrosamines. Keep it fresh and nitrate-free and you'll likely also be looking at leaner, less fattening foods. (Note, natural nitrates found in vegetables like beets and leafy greens are actually good for us and can help lower blood pressure and support heart health.)

Soda: Where do I even begin? Soda - I'm talking regular and diet - is strongly linked to obesity. Regular soda can pack nearly 200 calories per 12 ounce can in the form of refined sugar or high fructose corn syrup - the basic definition of empty calories. Though diet soda may seem better because it's calorie-free, we've discussed how the artificial sweeteners used in diet sodas can mess with our sense of taste and lead to increased appetite and weight gain.

Sugars: There are certain foods you know are high in sugars that will make you gain weight (frosted cupcakes, I'm pointing at you), but sugars are often snuck into foods that you may never suspect. For example, a small green tea latte made at a coffee shop can actually pack a whopping 41 grams of sugar! Or take packaged breads, which often list the caloric sweetener high fructose corn syrup as one of the first ingredients. Be on the lookout for these stealth sugars when reading ingredients labels. There is room for a little sugar in the diet, but as indulgences, not in everyday foods. Help clients understand that any added sugar, even natural ones like honey and maple syrup, need to be eaten in small amounts.

Trans fats: The results are in on trans fats and lucky for us it's good news. The FDA has stated that trans fats are no longer safe and companies will no longer be able to use partially hydrogenated oils in food production. Research has shown that trans fats increase the risk of heart disease by changing the consistency of your blood over time. Though partially hydrogenated oils will be gone for good, trans fat won't be completely wiped out, as there is naturally trans fats in some animal products and trans fats can be a byproduct of oil production.